

# LAWN MOWER SAFETY



A power lawn mower is one of the most dangerous tools around the home. Lawn mower injuries can result in amputation, disfigurement, sight loss and other serious wounds. Lawn mower injuries to adults, as well as children, can be prevented. Follow these safety tips:

- ☀ Prepare the lawn before mowing. Remove debris, sticks, rocks or any other potential flying objects from the area to be mowed.
- ☀ Fill the gas tank outdoors when the engine is cool. Never fill the tank in a garage or shed, because of the danger of gasoline fumes. Turn off the mower and let the motor cool before filling the fuel tank.
- ☀ Gasoline generally contains benzene, a recognized carcinogen (cancer causing agent). When working with gasoline, work in a ventilated area, wear gloves and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water when you are finished (even if you wore gloves).
- ☀ Always use protective eyewear. Earplugs and other forms of hearing protection are a good idea, but don't listen to portable music players to try and drown out the mower noise.
- ☀ Power mowers are especially dangerous on slopes. Push walk-behind mowers across (not down) slopes; drive riding mowers up and down slopes. Use good judgment about mowing on inclines.
- ☀ Tennis shoes and sandals are not suitable footwear for mowing. Wear heavy boots, ideally those with a steel toe, so that feet have some protection.
- ☀ Never carry a child while on a riding mower. If the child falls off but the driver remains on the mower, the automatic shut-off probably won't be activated.
- ☀ Make sure the mower is turned off before reaching underneath to remove grass clumps or debris. Many experts recommend using a bagging mower to collect grass clippings.
- ☀ Keep children in the house or in another supervised area of the yard while mowing, using an electric hedge clipper or weed whacker.
- ☀ A child should be at least 12 years old to operate a push mower and at least 14 to operate a riding mower.
- ☀ Wear sunscreen with a SPF of at least 15. Avoid mowing midday (between 10 AM and 3 PM) when the sun is the strongest.
- ☀ Mowing can be hot work, so stay hydrated with lots of water, ice tea or lemonade. Wait until after finishing to have a beer or other alcoholic beverages.

